prices of petroleum products would depend upon the variations in the international oil prices.

Agency for Transportation of Crude Oil

4136. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether he had recently shot down Disinvestment Minister's proposal on restoring nodal agency status to Shipping Corporation of India for transportation of crude oil; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) and (b) Government has decided that preferential treatment for Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) for crude movement and present favoured treatment of TRANSCHART to SCI ships may be continued for 2 years after disinvestment of SCI.

Allocation of Kerosene to Orissa

4137. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) the present monthly allocation of kerosene oil to Orissa;

(b) whether any request has been received to enhance monthly allocation of kerosene oil to Orissa; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by Government to allocate minimum 50,000 KL to Orissa as per their requirement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) Government made monthly kerosene allocation of 25,930 Metric Tonnes (MT) to the State of Orissa for distribution under Public Distribution System (PDS) during the first quarter of 2003-2004.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Commercial production of bio-diesel

4138. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMAD KHAN (DURRU) : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have since taken a decision for the mass production of bio-diesel;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether the soil of Rajasthan and particularly areas around Jaipur is most suitable for the production of bio-diesel;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the sector in which bio-diesel would be most suitable; and

(f) by when, the commercial production of bio-diesel would commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) and (b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Bio-diesel is produced from oils extracted from tree-borne oil seeds which can grow on degraded, waste, arid and semi-arid lands. As Rajasthan is a low rain fed State, it can be suitable for growing such plants and trees.

(e) Initially, the Government proposes to use bio-diesel in transport sector. However, it is reported to be used in the neat form in tractors.

(f) Commercial production of bio-diesel would depend on many factors *viz.* the field trials to testify the efficacy of bio-diesel and diesel blend, amendment of existing specifications of diesel to permit bio-diesel blending, large scale plantation of trees bearing oil seeds and setting up processing plants to extract bio-diesel therefrom.

LPG requirement of Karnataka

4139. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) the total requirement of LPG cylinders per month by domestic consumers in Karnataka;

(b) whether Government are aware that pilfering LP Gas from domestic cylinders and refilling it in cylinders of autorickshaw LPG Kits is going on in Bangalore and the other parts of Karnataka; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to stop such pilferage of LP Gas from domestic cylinders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) The average requirement of domestic LPG cylinders of the consumers registered with LPG distributors of Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in Karnataka is about 26 lakh per month.

(b) and (c) OMCs have not reported any established complaint of pilfering LPG from domestic cylinders and refilling it in cylinders of autorickshaw LPG Kits. However, LPG distributors of OMCs are under strict instructions to supply the cylinders of right quantity and quality to their customers. The Oil Company officials carry out random checks at distributor's godown, delivery point as well as enroute to ensure that no pilferage takes place.